

How Does Your Garden Grow?...

GROW NATIVE

Native plants are species that existed in an area prior to European settlement. They've developed over millennia and are adapted to local conditions. The big advantage for the green gardener is that native plants tend to be lower maintenance, requiring little in the way of supplementary watering and no synthetic chemicals.

- ❁ Learn about the native plants that grow in your area as well as what type of habitat they prefer in the wild (for example, woodland, meadow, prairie, wetland). Contact local naturalist groups, gardening organizations and environmental groups to find out if they've compiled lists of native plants or if they can recommend local wild areas to explore.
- ❁ Visit a specialty native plant nursery to find out what native plants are commercially available in your area (never dig plants from the wild).
- ❁ Compare the conditions found in your garden (shade or sun, dry or moist, etc.) to the conditions required by a variety of native plants that you're interested in growing and that are commercially available in your area. The native plants will thrive in your garden when you match the plants to the conditions - woodland plants for shade, sun-loving plants for meadows and prairies, wetland plants for moist areas.
- ❁ Water young transplants for the first six weeks after planting. After that, they should thrive without supplementary watering.
- ❁ Design your native plant garden in whatever style appeals to you - from formal to informal - but if you're going for a wild look, it might be a good idea to investigate your local bylaws.